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ABSTRACT

Ethnographic observations and teacher interviews were conducted in desegregated first grade classrooms to examine teachers' attitudes toward black female students, black females' orientations toward teachers, and black females' peer expectations. The research indicated that: (1) teachers considered black girls to have average or slightly below average academic skills; (2) in assessing academic work, teachers mentioned social skills more often for black girls than for white girls or boys of either race; (9) teachers encouraged black girls to pursue social contacts rather than to work for high academic achievement; (4) black girls received more teacher feedback for classroom behavior than for academic work; (5) teachers chatted with black girls less often than with other children; (6) black girls were more likely to enforce teachers' rules than white girls or boys of either race: (7) black females were less likely to approach the teacher than white females, but were more likely to do so than black males; (8) black girls had the most extensive peer ties of all students; and (9) black females used physical violence and verbal aggressiveness less frequently than males but more often than white females. It is suggested that black girls' socialization in classrooms is consistent with normative roles for black women in contemporary society. (Author/MJL)

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Black Females' 'Place' in Desegregated Classrooms

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Black Females' 'Place' in Desegregated Classrooms

Black females' experiences in schools, as in other areas of social life, have been studied less than those of other race-gender groups (see Allen, 1979; Davis, 1971; Hare, 1980; Murray, 1974). Research on schooling shows that black females differ from other race-gender students on academic performance, self-esteem, interactions with teachers, and peer relationships (see Byalick and Bershoff, 1974; DeVries and Edwards, 1977; Hare, 1980; Schofield, 1976). These works suggest that black girls occupy a distinctive ''place'' in desegregated classrooms which, in Hare's words, cannot be fully understood by extrapolating either from research on females or research on blacks.

Although these studies suggest a distinctive set of roles for black females in classrooms, they do not explore the scope of these children's roles in this setting nor the dynamics by which the roles emerge. Implications for classroom social order, and for the socialization of black girls to adult roles, also are underexplored.

This study uses longitudinal, ethnographic observations and intensive interviews to analyze black girls' ''place'' in desegregated classrooms. It is drawn from a larger study of classroom experiences of all race-gender groups. Although this paper focuses on black females, it draws contrasts with experiences of these children and other race-gender groups.

This paper assumes a particular model of the impact of education on intergenerational status mobility. It views schooling as an active, important influence in the transmission and maintenance of intergenerational status arrangements among persons of varying status configurations. Schools sort and filter students and socialize them differentially for adult roles, usually those played by persons of their same status characteristics (see Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Chesler and Cave, 1981; Ogbu, 1978). Opportunities for mobility are limited and arise only when there are macrosocietal demands for change (Ogbu, 1978). The sorting and filtering processes take place in schools beneath a rhetoric of equal opportunity, so that students placed in low tracks and

trained for low-status adult roles come to think that they ''merit'' such outcomes.

This paper traces micro-stratification processes in classrooms, many of them quite subtle, by which such sorting and training is accomplished for black females. It concentrates on four dimensions of classroom social life: teachers' expectations about black females; teachers' behaviors toward these children; black girls' behaviors toward teachers; and these children's experiences in peer networks. As will become apparent as the analysis proceeds, these heuristically-separable components are in fact inextricably bound. Classroom life is conceptualized as a complex web of interactions among many actors, not simply the outcome of teachers' behaviors toward students.

Sample and Methods

The author completed from 20 to 30 hours of ethnographic observations over five months in six first grades in working-class communities. Observations covered 142 students of whom 29 (or 20 percent) were black females. Although the school systems were predominantly white, the classrooms studied enrolled from 18 to 97 percent black students. The three black female teachers (Horton, Todd, Douglas) had, respectively, 22, 58, and 97 percent black students. The three white female teachers (Maxwell, Avery, Delby) had from 18 to 21 percent black students. Notes taken in 25 to 90-minute observation sessions were expanded into detailed, time-sequential ethnographic notes, usually within 24 hours. Observations covered all regularly-scheduled instructional activities, as well as informal periods such as lunch or recess.

Near the end of the observation period the author interviewed each teacher about academic and social skills of each child. Principals of each school also were interviewed. In addition, the author observed out-of-classroom interactions, spoke informally with children, parents, and other school staff, and gathered statistical and historical data on each school and community. These data, and the researcher's understanding of the setting resulting from five months as a peripheral member of its social order, were the bases of analysis.

Teachers' Expectations about Black Females

The six teachers responded to open-ended questions about each child's performance and social relationships. These were phrased: ''Tell me about [Child's Name]'s academic performance and skills'' and ''Tell me about [Child's Name]'s relationships with other children in the class.'' Probes attempted to elicit detailed information on each child. The form of the questions allowed discernment both of the direction of the teachers' assessments and the criteria they believed relevant in discussing children of each race-gender group.

Academic Skills: Teachers rated black girls' academic skills as average or slightly below, in comparison to all children in the class. Of the 29 black females, 4 (or 14 percent) were rated as above average; 15 (or 52 percent) as average; and 11 (or 38 percent) as below average or slow. Overall black girls were rated as less skilled than white females, but considerably more skilled than black males. They were rated most similarly to white males, with one important exception. Teachers noted that a portion of the white boys whom they rated as below average in academic skills were ''immature.'' These teachers believed the children's performances might improve as they matured. They did not indicate they expected such improvement for black girls.

All classrooms used ability groupings for reading instruction. Black females most frequently were placed in middle academic tracks, along with white males. Only two classrooms (both with black teachers) had black females in top reading groups. The next most common placement was in a low group, but black girls were only half as likely to be placed in bottom groups as were black males.

No black female was singled out by her teacher as having some outstanding ability (excellent spelling skills; remarkable artistic talent; keen math capabilities, etc.), although some children of all other race-gender groups received such accolades. More typically, teachers' assessments of black girls' academic skills reflected a ho hum quality, as in the evaluation of Carrie:

> She's about average in everything. Her work habits are good. She's very neat and quiet.... no problem at all. She can take care of herself. She usually doesn't have much to say.

Themes such as quiet, shy, no trouble, and self-sufficient appeared frequently in teachers' descriptions of black girls' academic skills. Teachers generally made a few perfunctory comments about academic performance, then moved on hurriedly to more extensive descriptions of social skills. One teacher's description of Terri was typical of this pattern:

> She's an average student, I would say, but oh, what a helper. She always keeps her eyes on things, picks things up, helps out other [students] who don't understand work or are having some problem. She is always asking: 'What can I do to help?'

Teachers' evaluations suggested that black girls' social skills, rather than their academic skills, might be the more critical to their success in schooling. This was apparent in her teacher's comments about the low-achieving Doris:

> It takes her longer to learn things than most children.... Other children help her out a lot, because Doris is such a pleasure to have in the class. She's always smiling, always trying, always being kind to other people. [Other students] have a lot of patience with her....They don't treat her the way they treat [other low-achievers]. I think that will be pretty important to her later on.

The mention of social skills in the assessments of academic work appeared in almost 50 percent of teachers' assessments of black girls, as compared to no more than 20 percent with other race-gender groups. With white girls teachers mentioned personal qualities (dress style, grooming, manners, etc.) in discussing academic work but typically gave more attention to the academics nevertheless. With male students they rarely discussed either personal attributes or social skills when describing academic abilities. Teachers suggested in subtle ways that making connections and developing social skills might be more important than academic performance for black females.

Teachers made the most extensive comments about academic skills of two groups: unusually high achievers (mostly white students) and unusually low achievers (disproportionately black males). The former they envisioned as promising great rewards through outstanding performance which reflected favorably on teachers' instructional skills. The latter they saw as threatening great embarrassment by exposing teachers as poor instructors and/or disrupting classroom order. The average, shy, quiet black females fell outside both groups and and hence in most of these classrooms they attracted only

limited teacher attention to their academic work. These patterns are consistent with research by Leacock (1968) and Byalick and Bershoff (1974) who discovered that teachers gave less attention to black girls' academic work than to that of all other race-gender children.

Social Relationships: In evaluating black girls' social relationships, teachers often identified them as mature, self-sufficient, and helpful. Teachers also saw white girls as mature, in comparison to other students, and noted that these children were cognitively mature and ready for school. With black girls, however, the assessment of ''maturity'' had a different meaning. Teachers did not see black girls as cognitively mature or ready for school but rather as socially mature. Some described a precocious social maturity which they actually believed to be detrimental to academic performance. One teacher, for example, praised six-year-old Edna for feeding and dressing herself and three preschool siblings each morning so that her mother, a nurse who worked the night shift, could get needed sleep. But the teacher added: ''Of course, all that responsibility doesn't give her much time to concentrate on [school work].''

Another teacher pointed out the preoccupation of a subgroup of black females in her class with adult roles. At recess these children regularly played house and divided up roles of mother, grandmother, teenaged sister, aunt, babysitter, and the like. They then cooked, groomed one another's hair, applied makeup, and prepared for dates with imaginary boyfriends. In class Show and Tell sessions the group bragged of having assumed adult roles such as keeping the infant nursery at church or cooking a large meal for relatives, while classmates spoke of sandlot ball games or showed material goods. The girls' teacher commented:

> In one sense they are grown up, but it's not all good. Sometimes they don't have any time to be children, to learn, to really concentrate on their work. When I want them to pay attention to math, they're passing around lipstick or giggling about who kissed whom on the bus yesterday. I think they would be better off if [their parents encouraged them] to be children in playtime and to concentrate more on their studies.

The precocious maturity of some black girls is similar to that observed by Ladner (1971) among black teenagers living in a

housing project. She found that most black girls lived in adult worlds at an early age. Parents gave them adult-level knowledge and responsibilities. They thought the children needed it to protect themselves from harsh realities from which parents could not shield them, and parents needed help with their own multiple responsibilities.[1] Rather than seeing this maturity as an asset, the teachers in this study viewed it as an impediment to learning.

The teachers identified black girls as generous and helpful toward them and toward peers. These qualities were mentioned nearly twice as often in discussions of black girls than of any other race-gender children. Indeed, such qualities seemed the most reliable means for these children to capture the teachers' favorable attentions.

Teachers' Behaviors toward Black Females

As was the case for all race-gender students, teachers' behaviors toward black females were partially consistent, and partially inconsistent, with their evaluations of them. In subtle ways the teachers in desegregated classrooms encouraged black girls to pursue social contacts, rather than press toward high academic achievement. The mostly-black Douglas classroom was an exception. In this room black girls received attention both for their social deeds and their academic work--a situation analogous to that faced by white females in most classrooms. Boys of both races received more attention and reward for work, rather than behavior.

Before proceeding with the discussion of teachers' behaviors toward black girls, it is necessary to explain conventions applied to numerical indicators gleaned from ethnographic notes. As Becker has noted (1958), frequency counts, or "quasi-statistics," can be used with ethnographic observations to describe recurrent, straightforward behaviors. These, along with phenomenological analysis of more complex behaviors, can be useful in portraying experiences in social settings.

Frequency counts reported in this paper are normed to 20 hours

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1.Rubin (1977) reports a similar precocious maturity among working-class white women. Thus, it might relate to class rather racial factors.

to take into account varying observational times in each room. Rates are reported as mean instances of a certain behavior for each child of a particular race-gender configuration in each classroom. A mean rate for all children in a particular classroom also is reported in tables. This procedure allows comparison of experiences of black females with those of other race-gender children.

Each classroom, however, constituted a distinctive social world, making cross-classroom comparisons problematic. For example, some teachers criticized children for work frequently and gave them little praise. Others did the reverse. Of interest in this paper is the relative distribution of teacher behaviors across diverse race-gender groups. Therefore, this paper compares across classrooms only at the ordinal level.

With sample data there are conventions about what represents a significant difference among numerical indicators. There are no similar conventions for quasi-statistics. As Becker notes, the researcher must bring to bear his or her perspective as a peripheral member of an ongoing social collectivity to determine what constitutes a meaningful difference. In this study a difference is considered meaningful if it differs .5 or greater in a positive or negative direction from the mean for all students. Thus, if the mean instances of a certain behavior are .5 or greater more for black females than for the average child in the class, black girls are ranked "high" on this measure. If black girls' means are .5 or greater less, they are ranked "low." They are said to be moderate, about average, or at the mean on a behavior if the per-child mean for black females in 20 hours is within .5 (plus or minus) of the mean for all children.

Feedback for Work: Consistent with previous work, black girls in these classrooms received less teacher feedback for work than most other race-gender students in the desegregated classrooms (Table 1). They were the only students to receive more feedback overall for classroom behaviors than for work.

Teachers praised the academic work of black girls at average or greater rates, compared to other race-gender students, in three classrooms. They were at the mean in two, and below in only one. Table 1 shows that these children received below-average amounts of work criticism in four classrooms, but greater-than-average amounts of criticism in the two desegregated rooms taught by

black teachers (Horton and Todd).

Despite average or better amounts of day-to-day praise for work, black females did not get a particularly noteworthy type of praise reserved almost exclusively for white females. Teachers sometimes singled out white girls for special duties which signaled them as unusually competent, trusted students. These included showing visitors around the room, helping peers on work as officially-designated aides, or orienting a new student. Males also rarely performed these duties. These special assignments might have over-riden the day-to-day patterns of praise and criticism and marked some children, generally always white females, as particularly competent in the eyes of their peers.

Recent works by Blumenfeld et al. (1981), Brophy (1981), Parsons et al. (1981) and Weinstein and Middlestedt suggest that the interpretation of teacher praise and criticism by students and its impact on their expectations and performances might be far more complex than previously realized. A variety of structural, cognitive, maturational, and situational factors affect the ways in which students interpret praise. If praise is seen as insincere, or if it is perceived as monitoring rather than admiration, it can have a negative rather than a positive impact on students' self-expectations for academic success. When praise to black girls is compared to that given other race-gender groups, they received larger shares of qualified praise ("A good paper--much better than yesterday's") or praise in sequences suggesting monitoring ("Yes, that's good. Now keep going. See if you can keep up the good work. Don't get distracted."). Black males, however, received even greater proportions of praise of this type.

Feedback for Behavior: Table 2 reports teacher feedback for classroom behavior of children of various race-gender groups. Comparisons of Tables 1 and 2 reveal that in most classroom the most frequent type of teacher feedback to children was criticism for behavior. Praise for behavior was the rarest. One teacher (Douglas) never praised behavior. In classes where teachers praised behavior, however, black girls received average or greater-than-average amounts of it, with one exception (Avery's class). They received less criticism than most children for classroom behaviors, but generally were criticized more than white females.

Comparisons of Tables 1 and 2 show that black females, like most race-gender students, received more praise for work than for behavior. They did, however, receive more praise for behavior than for work in two classrooms (Maxwell's and Horton's), while most other race-gender students received more work than behavior praise. In relationship to other race-gender students, however, black females ranked higher on the behavior praise than the academic praise dimension. They were highest of all groups in receipt of behavioral praise, except in Delby's room, where they and white girls received the same amount and were the most frequently praised groups for classroom behavior.

Teachers' behavioral praises were assymetrically distributed among black girls. In each white-teacher classroom, one black female received the bulk of praises to this group and was sometimes held up to classmates as an exemplar of appropriate behavior (though not as a model for good academic work). Teacher Maxwell, for instance, praised Camille nearly four times as often as her average student. Camille played an important social integrator role. She helped Maxwell maintain ties with children who would not contact her directly. She also served as a conduit of information from Maxwell to peers and made links among peer cliques which otherwise were unconnected. Camille and her counterparts in other rooms displayed what Granovetter has termed ''weak ties.'' He argues that such persons are essential to the cohesiveness of a collectivity. Integrators were immersed neither in the teachers' circles of influence nor in tight peer cliques. Instead, they were loosely connected to a wide range of classroom actors, weaving ties which bound together the class. All black girls had more extensive ties, in most instances, than other race-gender students.

Black teachers also had a special relationship with one white female, but this tie differed from the white teacher, black female alliance. The white girls represented teachers' interests with peers but did not carry influence in the other direction. They rarely, for instance, pleaded a peer's case with the teacher.

White teachers sometimes praised social integrators as a means of influencing behaviors of other children. An example was Maxwell's praise for Camille for 'sitting down and getting to work,' as she eyed other members of Camille's flock who had not yet taken their seats.

Thus, patterns of teacher feedback to black girls suggested two themes. First, teachers gave higher ratios of praise for behavior as compared to praise for work to this group than to other race-gender children. In addition to this,

teachers consciously or nonconsciously encouraged black girls to assume social integrator roles, further intensifying the development of their social rather than their academic skills. Although social integrators generally were skilled academically, they frequently sacrificed their own achievement to aid a peer: e.g., discontinued work on math to solve a problem for a tablemate.

Personal Relationships with Black Females: Another recurrent teacher behavior directed toward children was chatting, or engaging children in informal chats in which personal information was exchanged. Many of the formalities inherent in the teacher-student relationship were relaxed during chats. Teachers and students had the opportunity to know one another "out of role" and explore common interests. Children who participated in chats often seemed to have several advantages. First, they came to know the teacher better and perhaps became more willing to approach her when they needed aid. Second, they likely became more comfortable in the classroom, since chats often made links between a child's homelife and life in school. Third, chats gave students opportunities to demonstrate to teachers verbal skills and social maturity--two factors which were important in teachers' judgments about students' academic skills.

Teachers chatted with black girls in average or less than average amounts, in comparison to other children. The go-between black girl usually was an exception and chatted with her teacher more often than most black females. Black females once again fell outside the ranges of the most frequent candidates for chats. These were the highest achieving students whose performances were especially rewarding to teachers and the low achievers whom teachers hoped to know better as a means of control. Notably, black females were rebuffed more often than any other race-gender group in bids for chats.

In summary, black girls' teachers paid them little heed, in comparison to other race-gender groups, especially when it came to academic work. In Rist's (1979) terms they, more so than their black male classmates, were invisible children in desegregated classrooms. This was not the case in the mostly-black Douglas classroom, where they were treated quite similarly to their black male classmates and perhaps even slightly more favorably. In desegregated classrooms black females lost favored status with the teacher, usually to white females.

Black Females' Behaviors toward Teachers

An equally important component of black female-teacher interactions was these children's behaviors toward teachers. Black girls' orientations toward teachers ranged the continuum from apple-polishing to wary avoidance, with most falling in between. Although generally accepting of teachers and classroom rules, black females were notably less tied to teachers than were most white females and approached them only when they had a specific need to do so. Nevertheless, they were more likely to approach than were black males and sometimes served as their bridges to contacts with teachers. Unlike white children of both sexes, black females rarely approached teachers to boast of academic achievement or rule conformity. When black girls did approach teachers, a large portion of these approaches (almost 40 percent as compared to no greater than 17 percent for any other race-gender group) sought aid for a peer rather than for self. The go-between black female was especially likely to approach on behalf of a peer rather than self.

Challenge and Negotiation: Approaches were quick interchanges which sought information or a brief interchange of some sort. Challenges and negotiations were more assertive forms of student-initiated teacher contacts in which children sought to influence teachers on behalf of self or others. Challenges were public contacts in which students challenged teachers' accuracy, authority, or interpretation of rules or fact. Negotiations were private or semi-public interchanges in which students attempted to persuade teachers to alter rules or the day's agenda. These behaviors occurred only occasionally in each classroom, less than once per child in 20 hours, and black females engaged in either only rarely. Males of both races were the most frequent challengers and white males the most frequent negotiators in most classrooms. Black females did, however, use these tactics more often than did white girls, especially when the action might benefit a peer.

Meredith, for instance, engaged teacher Todd in an extended discussion about the possible lifting of a recess ban on a peer who had not completed homework. Black girls were generally compliant with teacher rules, but more willing than white female classmates to risk reprimands for use of these tactics.

Rule Enforcement and Tattling: Two student-initiated behaviors were revealing of students' orientations toward teachers: rule enforcement and tattling. Rule enforcements were instances in which a child tried to influence peers to obey teacher rules. Tattlings were instances in which a child informed the teacher about another student's misbehavior. Both actions indicated a willingness to serve as the teacher's agent in peer networks. Although these actions had peers as targets, they also required the authority of the teacher to back them up.

Table 3 shows that black girls were the most likely race-gender group to enforce rules in four of the five desegregated rooms. They also were nearly three times as likely to enforce as black male peers in the mostly black Douglas classroom.[2] In one class (Avery's) black girls enforced nearly five times as often as the average child, sometimes vehemently, as when Diana delivered karate chops to two boys who ignored the teacher's order to sit down. Although black girls enforced rules on diverse race-gender peers, they rarely were targets of enforcements by other children.

Enforcers came most often from the ranks of the second reading group. This was also the case for the white students who enforced. The action might have been an alternative route to academic performance to gaining the teacher's esteem. Some enforcements were genuine attempts to aid the teacher. Cheryl, for instance, was near tears when tablemates ignored her plea to be quiet as the teacher had requested. Juliette invariably called teacher Avery's attention to her enforcements, in an obvious bid for attention. Sometimes enforcements seemed intended as protections, as when Camille urged peers to ''look busy'' when she perceived the teacher was about to circle the room to check work. Whatever their intent, enforcements revealed that black girls were closely attuned to classroom rules and willing to promote compliance among peers.

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2. The single white male student in Douglas's room had extremely high interaction rates with the teacher and peers, as compared to classmates. It is difficult to know whether this reflected his race-gender status, his token status as the only white, or his personal qualities. His rates are reported but have been omitted from calculation of the classroom mean in tables.

Tattling was a different matter. Black girls were not particularly likely to tattle in comparison to other race-gender students. Black girls were at or below the mean for tattling in four classrooms, above in one desegregated classroom, and above in the mostly-black Douglas class (where tattling was most apt to be successful and the teacher punished the target of the tattle). Black girls were less successful than were white girls when they attempted to tattle (with a 42 percent success rate as compared to the white girls' 60 percent), but more successful than most boys. Tattling, more so than enforcement, perhaps represented a conflict with what several authors have identified as an important component of parental socialization of black children, particularly daughters: taking care of one's peers (see, e.g., Ladner, 1971; Lightfoot, 1978; Lewis, 1975; Reid, 1972).

The assumption of the enforcement, if not the tattling, role was consistent with an interpretation that black girls learned to seek teacher approval through social deeds, rather than academic work.

Black Females' Relationships with Peers

Black females' relationships with peers were logically related to their experiences with teachers, themes in parental socialization of these children, and the status of black women in society. Three themes were particularly noteworthy in these children's interactions in peer networks. First, black girls had the most extensive peer ties of any race-gender children and crossed race or gender lines in casual interactions more readily than other children. Second, black females gave and received high levels of academic and non-academic aid in peer networks and were most heavily involved in egalitarian, reciprocal relationships of this type. White girls gave far more aid than they received in return and were somewhat exploited in such interchanges. Males of both races received more aid than they dispensed. Third, black females could not be successfully controlled by peers by violence or threats of violence. Although females of both races were less likely than males to be involved in physical or verbal aggression, black girls (unlike their white female classmates) were less likely to back down from potentially violent encounters.

Taken collectively, their experiences in peer networks suggested that black girls were powerful in peer networks,

especially in comparison to white girls.

Helping Relationships: Table 4 shows rates of giving academic and nonacademic aid to classmates by black females and other race-gender groups. Black girls gave average or greater academic aid than the average child in most classrooms and stood out as especially likely to give nonacademic aid (help in tying shoes, finding lost pencils, comforting a child who was emotionally upset). Black girls also received a great deal of aid and engaged in these interchanges with a more diverse race-gender group than did most children. Notably, black males also gave substantial aid in many classrooms. White children, especially white males, rarely gave aid. The assymetrical (by sex) helping relationships which appeared for white children were not apparent for black females. They received greater return than did white girls on their efforts to help others and sometimes promoted cooperative efforts even when the teacher discouraged them.

Physical and Verbal Aggression: Black girls did not use physical violence as often as did males of both races, but they were involved in it more often than were white females in all but one of the desegregated classrooms. They were frequent targets in cross-sex physical aggression, however. Although cross-sex physical aggression constituted only 25 percent of all instances of physical aggression in these classrooms, black girls were overrepresented as victims in all classrooms.

Verbal aggression was difficult to analyze through ethnographic observation. Most instances which caught the observer's eye were in progress, and it often was difficult to discern which of the children involved had provoked the incident. Nevertheless, it was possible to record each child's involvement in verbal aggression. In all but one classroom, black girls were involved in such interchanges more often than white girls but less often than boys of both races. Frequently black girls used verbal aggression to retaliate against physical aggression by a white or black male directed against her. White girls were less apt to do this and more likely to complain to the teacher or attempt to hide the incident from the teacher's attention. Black girls, however, were more ready to engage in verbal aggression, even when it risked teacher reprimands. Diana, in Avery's room, lashed out at a white male classmate. When Avery reprimanded her, Diana called back: "Wait a minute. He said something bad about my mother, and I'm not through telling him off yet." White girls rarely took such

risks.

Black girls were overrepresented as targets of particularly dramatic forms of verbal aggression: racist and sexist remarks. Of eight sexist remarks recorded in observations, seven were male-to-female. Black females were targets in four instances, although they constituted only 20 percent of enrollments in these classes. They were the only victims of the six racist remarks recorded in observations, and in each instance the perpetrator of the remark was a white male. Typically the remark was made to a black girl who was the perpetrator's academic superior, often after she had been rewarded by the teacher for performance. A white male asked Diana, on the heels of a teacher compliment for her work: "When are you going to fatten up like most black ladies?" Schofield (1976), who found similar patterns in a desegregated junior high, termed this behavior appealing to one's "strong suit." The male child, feeling threatened in this instance, referred to his ascendant status in external society, based on whiteness and maleness and brought this seemingly irrelevant status to bear to put Diana in her place (see also Berger et al., 1980). Thus, black girls were punished by peers for outstanding academic performance, perhaps further encouraging them to take the safer path of developing social, rather than academic skills. In this instance, as in most, the teacher ignored the racist remark.

Implications

This paper has drawn an intentionally complex portrait of experiences of black females in desegregated classrooms. It has provided further evidence that black girls' roles differ from those of other race-gender groups and deserve further research attention. The roles are formed by the interaction of multiple forces, including parental socialization, teacher expectations, teacher-student and peer interactions, and societal proscriptions about appropriate roles for various race-gender persons.

Black females, particularly those who play the social integrator role, may be critically important to the social cohesiveness of desegregated classrooms. They may serve as the "social cement" which binds together otherwise unrelated actors. This role, however, largely goes unrecognized and unrewarded by teachers, although they likely encourage it in subtle ways.

Implications of classroom roles for black girls' socialization to adult roles are less clear. Especially in desegregated classrooms, these children are encouraged to develop social, as opposed to academic skills. Although such skills are useful in performing high-status adult occupational roles, the lack of attention to black girls' academic work might limit their potential for high attainment in education and the gaining of credentials for entering such positions. Overall, however, classroom experiences seemed more to encourage black girls to take on stereotypical roles of black women than to aspire for others. These included serving others rather than developing one's own skills, maintaining a low profile, and assuming the burden of maintaining peaceable ties among diverse groups of persons.

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Table 1

Mean Instances of Praise and Criticism for Academic Work for Each Child of Each Race-Gender Group in Six Classes, Per 20 Observational Hours

Classroom/ Teacher*	Praise					Criticism				
	BF	BM	WF	WM	All**	BF	BM	WF	WM	All**
Maxwell	1.72	2.56	2.03	3.15	2.59	1.70	1.20	.75	1.40	1.15
Avery	2.30	2.00	2.00	1.70	1.92	.50	0	2.00	1.00	1.78
Delby	2.50	3.50	1.10	.89	1.42	.50	3.50	1.40	1.60	1.58
Todd	3.40	3.00	4.40	4.50	3.75	3.40	3.16	1.06	1.00	2.36
Horton	3.00	1.50	1.16	.66	1.09	1.50	1.75	3.17	2.22	2.33
Douglas	1.80	2.00	***	4.00	1.90	.60	1.77	***	1.48	1.08

* All teacher names are fictitious.

** Mean for all children of all race-gender statuses in this classroom.

*** Douglas had no white females, and only one white male, enrolled in her classroom.

Table 2

Mean Instances of Praises and Reprimands for Classroom Behavior of Each Child of Each Race-Gender Group in Six Classes, Per 20 Observational Hours.

Classroom/ Teacher*	Praises					Reprimands				
	BF	BM	WF	WM	All**	BF	BM	WF	WM	All**
Maxwell	4.00	.49	1.57	.75	1.42	10.50	17.00	9.40	15.30	12.52
Avery	.67	0	2.00	3.00	2.00	11.20	7.60	8.80	9.60	9.88
Delby	1.00	.50	1.00	.25	.73	3.50	25.00	10.50	15.00	12.57
Todd	1.23	.20	1.17	.50	.83	5.80	12.00	1.33	6.00	6.25
Horton	2.00	1.00	.33	1.33	1.05	13.00	14.00	15.00	11.80	13.09
Douglas	0	0	***	0	0	6.50	14.90	***	34.00	11.08

*Teacher names are fictitious.

**Mean for all students in the class of all race-gender statuses, except that single white male in Douglas's room has been omitted from calculation of the class mean.

***Douglas's class enrolled no white females and only one white male.

Table 3

Mean Instances of Enforcement of Teacher Rules on Peers By Each Child of Each Race-Gender Group in Six Classrooms in 20 Hours

Classroom/Teacher	BF	BM	WF	WM	All
Maxwell	1.32	.53	1.18	1.11	1.09
Avery	6.25	.38	.66	1.33	1.23
Delby	2.00	1.00	1.70	1.42	1.57
Todd	1.44	0	.17	.25	.63
Horton	1.58	1.05	2.27	.26	1.15
Douglas	1.20	.42	***	5.00	.77*

* Mean excludes the one white male enrolled in this classroom.

*** Douglas's class had no white female students enrolled.

Table 4

Mean Instances of Giving Academic or Nonacademic Aid to Peers for Each Child of Each Race-Gender Group, In Six Classrooms, in 20 Hours of Ethnographic Observation

Classroom/ Teacher	Academic Aid*					Nonacademic Aid**				
	BF	BM	WF	WM	All	BF	BM	WF	WM	All
Maxwell	1.06	0	.51	.40	.47	.53	.80	.95	.32	.61
Avery	2.00	.75	1.13	.35	.83	1.75	0	.47	.46	.58
Delby	2.00	2.50	1.80	.40	1.47	2.00	3.00	1.40	1.00	1.50
Todd	.56	1.00	1.50	2.00	1.13	1.44	1.22	.33	0	.96
Horton	1.60	2.10	1.75	.79	1.39	3.68	2.63	2.28	1.28	2.05
Douglas	2.70	3.08	***	11.00	2.91***	1.00	1.60	***	4.00	1.33***

* Refers to aid useful in completing of academic lessions, including answering questions about content and procedures, demonstrating tasks, forwarding questions to the teacher, etc.

** Refers to all aid other than that directed at lessons, including finding lost items, helping to tie shoes, comforting when distressed, aiding in clearing desk, etc.

*** Douglas had no white females and only one white male enrolled in her class. The white male child has been excluded in the calculation of the classroom means.